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Paris in Bogotá: Applying the Aid Effectiveness Agenda in Colombia

Rosemary McGee and Irma García Heredia
May 2010

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Summary

Recent research in the field of development aid persuasively problematises aid relationships and begins to reveal their significance for the real-life application and effectiveness of international development cooperation. Until insights from such research percolate through aid machineries such as the OECD DAC and its workings, the country-level consequences of universal aid frameworks and prescriptions will continue to be insufficiently foreseen, and in some cases unexpectedly problematic.

This paper is about an in-depth, qualitative study of the application of the Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness in Colombia. This middle-income, non-aid-dependent country with a prolonged and complex internal armed conflict and a poor human rights record, hitherto on the margins of international aid circles, has fast assumed a high-profile role in them via its adoption of the PD. The study stemmed from a conviction that PD application in Colombia has unanticipated consequences, with under-appreciated impacts on the strategies of donors and social actors. Donors are subject to an attempt to push them (back) into a technocratic corner. In this politically complex context where donors' presence owes at least as much to concerns over Colombia's international human rights performance as to classic aid donor concerns with widespread extreme poverty, this is worrying and undesirable.

It also has serious implications for the tripartite aid dialogue process established in 2003, involving Government, donors and social actors. This, for all its flaws and frustrations, is unique and important in a historic context of polarised, antagonistic and violent relationships between the state and left-wing advocates of human rights and social democratic principles.

It will require skilful and opportunistic responses by both donors and social organisations to turn this conjuncture to their favour, in the sense of strengthening their leverage on the Government in relation to human rights, poverty, conflict and democratic governance.

Keywords: aid relations; policy; participation; donors; rights; Latin America; Colombia; Paris Declaration.

Rosemary McGee is a Research Fellow in the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies. She has extensive work experience in policy and programme posts in the international development NGO sector. Her research and teaching focuses in particular on forms of citizen participation in decision-making, governance and rights-claiming processes; and on the characteristics, effects and current tendencies of the international aid system, both official and non-governmental. Her doctoral research was conducted in a violence-torn region of Colombia, as was much of her NGO work, and she continues to work closely on that country as well as others in Latin America and Africa.

Irma García Heredia is a specialist in law, political science and international aid. For the last 20 years she has worked in various roles in international aid organisations and platforms in Colombia, with a focus on policy advocacy, accompaniment and support to social organisations and processes.

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Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
GoC	Government of Colombia
IACC	Inter-American Commission and Court
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INGOs	international non-governmental organisations
LCB	London-Cartagena-Bogotá (process)
LIC	Low Income Country
MIC	Middle Income Country
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PD	Paris Declaration
SNCI	Sistema Nacional de Cooperacion Internacional
UNHRC	UN Human Rights Council

1 Introduction

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness¹ will prove to be only as good as its application in the real world of aid relationships. Like all universalist technocratic frameworks, it needs to be appraised in the light of political and social realities of the diverse contexts where it is applied. Recent perspectives on development aid (Groves and Hinton 2004; Eyben 2006; Wallace 2006) emphasise the need to understand it in terms of power relationships played out between politically motivated actors in political contexts, as distinct from the technocratic focuses that have dominated aid debates. The important implications of these understandings have yet to percolate through inter-governmental aid bureaucracies like the OECD DAC, whose core business involves generalising, standardising and promoting aid recipes like the PD around the world. One corollary of this is that the country-level consequences of universalist aid prescriptions are rarely fully appreciated in advance.

This paper stems from a conviction that the application of the PD in Colombia constitutes a worrying case of unanticipated consequences. We argue that as a consequence of Colombia's adherence to the PD, aid donors are now subject to an attempt to push them (back) into a technocratic corner, with a purely technical role, a worrying and undesirable development in this politically complex context marked by internal armed conflict and human rights abuses.

Our study² applies an 'aid relationships' perspective to analyse the process of applying the PD in Colombia. We are not disinterested academic researchers, but each bring to this topic longstanding interest and experience in the aid, policy and development scene in Colombia. Irma García coordinated DIAL, a Bogotá-based advocacy network of international development NGOs, from 1999 to 2007, and Rosemary McGee was the Colombia Country Representative of Christian Aid and an active member of the DIAL network, from 2004–2006. In these capacities, we were each personally involved in the establishment and unfolding of the London-Cartagena-Bogotá process, discussed below, and broader aid relations with Government, international official aid and diplomatic actors, and Colombian and international NGOs and social movements, in the period leading up to Colombia's adoption of the PD. We promoted and supported efforts by donors to exert to the full their limited leverage on the Government of Colombia (GoC) on human rights, internal displacement and conflict issues. This background enables us to contextualise our research findings against the complex web of relationships and processes characterising the various spaces of the Colombian aid scene.

We were curious about the details of the adoption of the Paris Declaration in Colombia, mindful that Colombia has only recently joined international aid

1 Hereafter PD.

2 The research on which this paper is based was supported by the Participation and Development Relations programme of the Participation, Power and Social Change (PPSC) Team at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK, using resources provided to the PPSC by Swiss Development Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Agency.

circles such as that which revolves around the PD, and has quickly and purposefully assumed a prominent role in this circle, despite being a far from typical aid recipient³ or 'partner country'. We were frankly sceptical about the Government's motives in relation to the PD, and worried that donors might view Colombia's adherence simplistically, as a benign or positive development. Our concerns are well captured by this citation from a document published by ABColombia, an international advocacy project, shortly after we conducted our fieldwork in February–March 2009:

According to the declaration, recipient countries should exercise strong and effective leadership over their own development policies and strategies, supported but not led by donors. In many developing countries this emphasis is vital, but in the Colombian context, where internal armed conflict and ongoing human rights violations are rife, directly funding government agencies could reduce the room for manoeuvre and access to resources for civil society organisations [and, we would add, official donor agencies and diplomatic missions] that are working to hold the state to account.

(ABColombia 2009: 26)

In particular, three fundamental PD principles appear to have possibly undermining implications for official donors' and civil society actors' efforts to exert policy leverage on conflict and human rights issues in the Colombian context:

- government ownership of development strategies, and by extension aid agendas, funds and processes
- donor alignment with partner governments' strategies and country systems
- harmonisation of donor activities. Although the PD includes 'principles for delivering effective aid in fragile states' (OECD DAC 2005: 7) which seek to nuance the harmonisation prescription for 'environments of weak ownership and capacity', these have limited applicability in Colombia, which is not generally considered a fragile state and certainly not a context of weak ownership.

We thus set out to investigate the details of the adoption and application of the PD from a wide range of perspectives. We explored through our reading and interviews:

- why the PD has been adopted so enthusiastically by GoC, and what role the international community has played in this

3 There is no perfect, incontrovertible terminology for denominating those states that are net providers of international aid and those that are net recipients of it. The terms 'donor' and 'recipient' are politically undesirable because they assign to each, under technocratic guise, certain over-simplified positions in a power relationship; and technically undesirable because they are not watertight, in the sense that some 'recipients', including Colombia, are also 'donors'. But convenience demands that we choose a terminology and use it consistently, and this one being common in PD literature and language, it will suffice.

- what the implications of its adoption are for donors, and for Colombian civil society and international non-governmental organisation (INGOs) advocates who engage with the GoC and donors on development, human rights and conflict issues
- what can be learnt from the Colombian case that is useful for the wider, real-world application of the PD.

We drew on a combination of primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources consist of aid and development literature, both published and grey. Primary sources are interviews conducted in Bogotá in February–March 2009 with 25 purposively selected key informants located in the Colombian government, official donor agencies, Colombian and international NGOs, listed at Annex 1. While the general approach and specific precepts underpinning our research draw on secondary sources that refer to all, the majority or an archetype of PD signatories, our empirical evidence is thus limited to Colombia, preventing us from drawing any general conclusions about application in PD signatory aid-recipient countries overall. Our aspiration is narrower but deeper: to complement existing knowledge about ‘Paris in practice’ by exploring the real-life application of the PD in one Latin American middle-income country characterised by no aid dependency,⁴ high institutional capacity, a protracted human rights crisis and armed internal conflict, and a relatively small and recent official donor presence. Historically, donor presence responds more to political concerns relating to conflict, human rights and drugs control than to the classic aid focus on widespread and extreme poverty, and the donors tend to cast themselves more as policy partners than as aid donors.

Brief explanations of certain terms and translations are needed. The Spanish word generally used in Colombia to refer to aid is ‘*cooperación*’, and, occasionally ‘*ayuda*’ (literally, help). The distinction between financial aid and other forms of cooperative relationship lying within the realms of diplomacy and international relations, is significant to this study. Much aid discourse now takes for granted that aid relationships embrace more than financial transfers, including some measure of involvement by donor or other Northern governments and intergovernmental bodies in aid policy, political dialogue and influencing through diplomatic channels, and possibly reflecting trade relations. We translate ‘*cooperación*’ as ‘aid’, but submit that at the heart of the struggles over aid which we recount is a struggle over meaning. The Government of Colombia’s construction of aid and aid policy dialogue, circumscribes it to the narrower sense of financial transfers. This is pitted against a conception of aid held by a significant number of donors operating in Colombia, as a complex set of relationships and interfaces, including but overrunning these financial transfers, extending into a range of fields related to ‘development’ understood at its broadest, in which progress made may bear no relation to financial transfers from Northern to Southern country.

4 0.4 per cent of Gross National Income, in contrast with Afghanistan at 37.8 per cent, Liberia at 54.1 per cent, or nearer home, Bolivia at 6.5 per cent and Nicaragua at 15.4 per cent (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/table6_11.pdf, accessed 24 September 2009).

Translation difficulties also arise with '*política/o*'. The noun '*política*' means public policy or a specific policy. The adjective '*política/o*' means political or relating to politics. In relation to aid in Colombia, '*diálogo político*', referred to constantly in our interviews, sometimes means aid policy dialogue and sometimes means political dialogue. Here again is the struggle over meaning: the Colombian Government welcomes the 'international community' and 'civil society' into aid policy dialogue but seeks to restrict the former's role and exclude the latter from any dialogue over public policy or (what it defines as) politics. We have tried to render it in English in ways faithful to the sense and context in which it was said.

There are well-rehearsed reasons to avoid using certain collective nouns such as 'international community' and 'civil society' to refer to key aid actor groupings as if monolithic and homogenous in their natures, interests and stances. Both terms are used widely in Colombia, with little critical consideration of the pitfalls. We use 'international community' to translate virtually every use of '*comunidad internacional*' that arose in our interviews and in the Colombian literature, because there is a recognisable grouping, called the G24, formed by the majority of 'international community' members with representation in Colombia. While of course not devoid of internal differences, it does refer to itself as a community, seek to advance collective interests and take joint stances in its relationship with the Colombian government. For the myriad uses of '*sociedad civil*' arising in our interviews and the Colombian literature, we mainly avoid translating it as 'civil society'. Alternative terms are used that better reflect the diversity it harbours in Colombia and avoid directly invoking either of the two principal normative strands of civil society thinking dominant in the literature, Gramsci's and de Tocqueville's (Lewis 2002; Edwards 2009), although, as will be clear by the end of this report, Colombian 'civil society' generally acts according to the Gramscian version, and certain donors, and the Government when it admits *any* role for it, foist upon it a de Tocquevillian version.

In Section 2 we review the current state of knowledge on real-life PD application, broadly discuss motivations underpinning aid relationships, and outline the aid environment in Colombia prior to adoption of the PD. Section 3 presents our findings, with particular reference to the contours that the PD implementation process had taken on by the time of our fieldwork. Section 4 concludes by returning to the concerns and questions motivating our research.

2 Paris and Bogotá

2.1 The Paris Declaration and its application

The Paris Declaration was adopted by more than 100 aid-donor and -recipient states at the High Level meeting of the Development Assistance Committee on 2 March 2005. It is an international agreement which commits donor and recipient country signatories to increase their efforts in 'harmonisation,

alignment and managing aid for results with a set of monitorable actions and indicators' (www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html). It addresses a range of limitations on aid effectiveness that inhere in donor country practices and in recipient countries' practices, institutions and capacity (OECD DAC 2005/2008: 1).

A few well-informed observers have warned of the challenges posed to the PD by country realities (Hyden 2008; Booth 2008; Eyben 2006, 2008). Some of them, writing at the general level rather than with any specific country reality in mind, specifically call attention to the way the PD renders invisible or fails to factor in the power and politics that lie at the heart of aid relationships. Most, defining 'effectiveness' and 'aid effectiveness' in less technocratic, more open-ended and holistic ways than the PD itself, conclude that this will compromise the effectiveness of the Paris agenda (Booth 2008; Eyben 2006, 2008; Armon 2006; Hyden 2008; Ferrero y de Loma Osorio 2009).

Others scrutinise and test all or some of the PD principles against real life in the real world of aid relationships in specific regions and countries, teasing out the necessary adjustments in interpretation and application of the PD that the diverse contexts of the global South demand in practice (Foresti *et al.* 2006; Wright-Revolledo 2007; Pineda and Schulz 2008; OPM/IDL 2008; Hyden 2008; Hayman 2009; Schulz 2009; Wallace 2009). Hyden (2008) points out that critical to the implementation of the PD is 'understanding better the role that power plays in the aid relationship', adding that [t]hese are not new issues but the context is new' (p259). He unpacks issues of partnership, harmonisation and understanding of cultural and political realities in Tanzania, to support his argument that the trust and accountability necessary for attaining the national ownership essential to the PD 'will not occur unless [donors] better understand that development co-operation is no longer just about policy but also about politics' (p259–60). Hayman (2009)'s in-depth analysis of aid relations behind the PD in Rwanda reveals the complexity of building the sort of joint ownership that is needed for aid to be optimally effective.

In this literature specific mentions of Colombia are very few, as are the sort of in-depth detailed country studies that we report on. Wright-Revolledo (2007) analyses DAC country reviews to derive lessons about how diverse state-society relations in donor countries shape the way Paris principles are applied to the relationships between these and their development partner countries. Although discussing these dynamics primarily in donor countries, the paper makes several points that are suggestive for the Colombia case: 'Countries differ in terms of state-civil society relations thus one model will not fit all. [...M]ore attention to context would recognise the risks of alignment of civil society with state priorities. Only in this way can the autonomy and distance that civil society enjoys from government be preserved' (p6).

Schulz (2009) finds that '[b]oth technical and political dimensions find specific challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean' (p2), connected to most LAC countries' middle-income status. Like us he notes the scarcity of analysis of the viability of the Paris principles in the LAC context. While warning against overstating the contrasts between low-income aid-dependent LAC countries and middle-income non-aid-dependent ones, he notes that the sub-group of

(middle-income) LAC aid-recipients to which Colombia belongs ‘seems to articulate aid effectiveness from a position of greater national autonomy, advocating that international cooperation should complement other resources available for development. On this basis, [this sub-group has] traditionally kept a more horizontal relation based on shared interests with the donor community’ (p3). Summarising the utility and adaptability of the Paris principles through the distinctive lens of LAC countries in general, Schulz relates Colombia’s more autonomous position *vis-à-vis* donors to its relatively recent entry into the aid effectiveness debate in general, and the PD in particular (p3).

Arising from the recognition in the PD that ‘fragile and conflict-affected situations pose particular challenges’ (pi), OPM/IDL (2008) unpacks these in search of greater understanding of their implications for PD implementation, in preparation for the High Level Forum in Accra in September 2008. In situations where the PD’s underlying ‘assumptions about national government capacity, objectives, effective control and legitimacy do not hold’, either the PD will not fulfil its aid effectiveness promise, or donors’ international engagement through aid provision must be coupled with a state-building agenda, to address and remedy gaps in capacity, effectiveness and legitimacy (piii). However, these principles hardly apply to MICs which combine well-developed public administrations with protracted internal armed conflicts of a complex political nature. Not sitting easily with ‘fragile and conflict-affected states’ as defined by the current discourse, Colombia is largely beyond the purview of this report.

Awareness that complex and diverse country realities challenge the general Paris principles increased with the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Accra in September 2008. The OCED DAC (www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_18638150_1_1_1_1,00.html, accessed 25 March 2010) recognises that ‘[t]he commitments agreed in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) need to be adapted to different country circumstances – including middle-income countries, small states and countries in situations of fragility’. Thus we can expect more in-depth and case-specific analysis and action to ensue from these debates in future, and submit the present study as a contribution to this.

2.2 What’s the appeal of Paris?

In considering why countries would want to sign up to the PD it is useful to start with a few premises about aid. Although elementary, these are not necessarily familiar to observers in countries like Colombia, where aid and its discourse have occupied a marginal role hitherto in public policy and academic circles. To these we add some more specific insights provided by Eyben *et al.*’s (2004) analysis of arguments and mechanisms for aid to MICs.

Firstly, familiar from the large aid literature is the idea that donor countries give aid and recipient countries receive it in response to considerations of both an economic/financial/technical nature; and considerations of a political or ideological nature (Eyben 2008; Robb 2004: 21; Sogge 2002; Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen 2003; Riddell 2007). The PD embodies the donor community’s current central preoccupation with aid effectiveness.

Commitment to it is correlated with access to the benefits of aid. A country wishing to increase the volume of aid it receives ('more aid') or improve the effectiveness or quality of the aid it receives ('better aid') may seek to achieve this through adopting and implementing the Declaration, and in doing so can be expected to be driven by a combination of these two sets of factors above.

Secondly, '[t]he role of aid has to be understood in the wider context of international relations. The "*realist*" approach to international relations assumes that each country pursues its own interest and that aid is a part of that pursuit' (Eyben *et al.* 2004: 12). Thus, a country signing up, regardless of whether it pursues more or better aid, is best understood as acting in its own interests within the wider context of its 'web' of relationships (Eyben 2006: 2) with other actors on the international stage. The increased or more effective aid that may result from its adherence is but one among several possible perceived beneficial consequences of this move. In the case of MICs (a category in which a significant minority of PD signatory countries fall), there are reasons for wanting and receiving aid that are 'likely to be more complex [than in] LICs because of a wider range of interests at play in both receiving and giving countries' (Eyben *et al.* 2004: 11).

Thirdly, the motivations driving actors' behaviour with respect to their aid relations or their international relations more widely will combine reasons overtly expressed and acknowledged – by recipients and their donors alike – with other reasons less readily expressed and acknowledged. Common among the former are likely to be aid recipients' desires to lever more aid out of donors, to render existing aid flows more effective by clearing up unsystematic and even chaotic aid administration, and to develop closer relationships with key aid-giving countries. Among the latter might be the 'international public goods case' – a desire by aid donors and recipients to get prominent national problems (drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorism) framed as international problems requiring international solutions in the form of international public goods such as reduced drug trafficking, reduced money laundering, reduced international terrorism (Eyben *et al.* 2004: 15); or the aid-recipient's desire to increase donor governments' confidence in its government and improve the political standing of the government and country on the international stage. These are not mutually exclusive: enhancing the recipient country's image as a good, accountable aid manager helps improve its international standing in a range of circles, and not necessarily only aid-focused ones. About the less overtly expressed motivations for countries' behaviour as aid actors, their aid partners and other actors – including interested researchers – can but speculate and hypothesise, on the basis of informed analysis of the available evidence.

As for why Paris might appeal to Colombia, a few broad *prima facie* considerations are enlightening before we delve into our data. As revealed at a seminar hosted by the Government of Colombia to examine the pros and cons of signing up (see *Acción Social* 2007b), a surprising number of the non-aid-dependent MICs in the region were already signed up (Peru, Mexico, Argentina), as well as LICs (Guatemala and Honduras). Colombia could be seen to just be joining the club. Conversely, the same event revealed how and

why several MICs considered the PD of little relevance, and gave secure grounds for expecting non-adoption to have no calamitous consequences, as it had not for Brazil or Chile.

Bula *et al.* (2007: 15–16) recall that in 1976 Colombia attempted to join the OECD, an unusual move for a ‘third world’ nation at that time and therefore disconcerting for OECD members, who responded by kicking the request into the long grass and letting it quietly expire. This historical datum reveals on Colombia’s part a self-perception that might help us understand behaviour in respect of the PD; and its perception of such spaces as useful, as desirable clubs to belong to.

Finally, newcomers to international aid circles might over-value the benefits of involvement in OECD mechanisms and particularly in its working groups and task forces, compared to the perceptions of countries with greater experience in the aid game. Where newcomers consider it an honour to form part of such circles and take on such responsibilities, old-timers might, rather, experience fatigue and decline to compete for such roles, considering it a success to stay out of them. One interviewee saw Colombia’s irruption on the PD scene as a case of taking advantage of a vacuum, recalling that since Nicaragua and Bolivia had adopted the PD under previous governments, their current governments attached little importance to it and Northern governments were therefore keen for another Latin American nation to join up.

2.3 The Colombian aid context

The context into which the Colombian government released its announcement of adherence to the PD in November 2007 was made up of three distinct but inter-related strands of activity and debate. Here we provide a broad-brush-stroke sketch of the Colombian aid scenario up to and including the point of adoption, following these three strands and drawing on secondary literature, interviews and our own experience as actors in that scenario.

2.3.1 The London-Cartagena-Bogotá process

What we now know as the London-Cartagena-Bogotá (LCB) process was initiated in 2003 by a group of donors led by the UK. They intended to improve the strategic direction of aid to Colombia, bringing the GoC’s aid requests more into line with the reality of armed internal conflict, a humanitarian crisis, severe inequality and pockets of poverty. While Colombia does not depend on aid, it does need the presence of aid actors. Rising to the donors’ challenge, therefore, early in its tenure the government of right-wing President Álvaro Uribe Vélez convened a donors’ roundtable in London in June 2003 (Bula *et al.* 2007: 17).

‘Civil society’ in Colombia includes many left-wing opponents of the ongoing Uribe government who, given the country’s history of violent suppression of left-wing political organising and the right-wing political elite’s intolerance towards them, have lacked spaces and opportunities for legitimate political

debate, dissent or influence on public policy. As social actors they have long lobbied successive national governments on issues of human rights, peace-building and alternative development strategies and worked with the international community and international NGOs to address these via donors' aid programmes. As aid actors with an intensely political analysis of Colombian reality, they set out to convert the London Round Table into a space for political and policy dialogue over the role of aid in Colombia. The declaration they presented to Colombian and other governments in London states:

Colombia urgently needs the defence and strengthening of the rule of law,⁵ a political solution to the internal armed conflict and full respect for human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as imperatives for securing peace and democracy. Consequently, international aid to Colombia must be directed at supporting initiatives that lie within these parameters and do not contravene human rights and IHL norms, nor promote the dismantling of the rule of law or otherwise exacerbate our terrible humanitarian crisis.

(La Alianza 2003, www.laalianza.org.co/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&catid=44&Itemid=67, accessed 13 April 2010)

The London meeting established a tripartite dialogue space between social actors, the GoC and international community representatives, still ongoing. At its key roundtable meetings in London (2003), Cartagena (2005) and Bogotá (2007), donor actors have issued declarations, drawing on social actors' perspective among others, that the GoC has approved (G24 2003, 2005, 2007). These constitute the foundations of an aid policy and set the agenda for the LCB dialogue process.

Early in the LCB process the 'international community' organised itself into the 'G24', the group of 24 foreign governments and intergovernmental bodies that initiated it. From its initial role of silent witness in the debates between the Government of Colombia and civil society actors, this group responded to the course of events by gradually assuming a role of greater dynamism and bolder positioning on sensitive issues. While it had no decision-making power, it began to send out signals on these issues which did find their way into the establishment of priorities and policies by Government.

Social actors organised themselves into the 'Alliance of Social and Like-Minded Organisations for a peace- and democracy-focused aid strategy in Colombia' or 'Alliance', best classified as a social movement. This later forged a lasting strategic alliance with other social groupings including the Catholic Church and business associations. The Alliance plus these other groupings represents 'civil society' in the LCB.

5 The Spanish rendition here is 'Estado Social de Derecho'. The correct translation of 'Estado de Derecho' is 'Rule of Law', but the Colombian Constitution specifically characterises Colombia as 'Estado *Social* de Derecho'. An accurate if cumbersome rendition of 'Estado Social de Derecho' is 'Social and democratic state, subject to the rule of law' – thanks to James Lupton for this.

The LCB process consists of a relatively intensive but continuous tripartite dialogue taking place in meetings of different scope, sizes and focuses since 2003, its three actor groups the G24, social actors variously arranged in and around the Alliance, and Government in the form of *Acción Social* (Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Aid), and the Aid Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The process's milestones are the London (2003), Cartagena (2005) and Bogotá (2007) inter-governmental Round Tables or Conferences on Aid. Each of these has been preceded by an event convened by civil society organisations in which high-level Government and international community representatives have participated. In the words of the UN Resident Coordinator, 'It is far from common to see a triangulation of this kind – a dialogue about peace, equitable development, human rights and democracy as aid priorities'.⁶

2.3.2 'Putting our house in order': the national aid system

In parallel to the LCB process, the GoC set about putting its own aid house in order. Under the direction of Luis Alfonso Hoyos, Presidential Advisor on Social Action, it created the National Aid System (SNCI, *Sistema Nacional de Cooperación Internacional*) in 2004 and, within the President's Office, the aid management unit *Acción Social*, and formulated an aid strategy for 2003–6, which it discussed with social actors in the presence of the G24. Later, the GoC unilaterally formulated a further aid strategy for 2007–10, consulting other LCB actors on a full draft. This significantly altered the direction and emphasis with respect to the 2003–6 strategy, foregrounding the Millennium Development Goals, the 'war on drugs' and environment, and drastically reducing the emphasis on democratic governance, rule of law and human rights issues.

These changes surprised the G24 as much as social actors. The latter held that the changes in emphasis undermined the London and Cartagena Declaration commitments in respect of strengthening the rule of law and human rights, constructing lasting peace and a sustainable development model through social and economic reforms, and instead relegated these vital issues to the margins of the new aid strategy. International NGO actors pointed out that by effectively invisibilising the armed internal conflict and its causes and consequences, the new strategy made it difficult for aid-givers to define relevant aid programmes (DIAL 2007). The new strategy, which cast social actors in a role of monitoring the implementation of aid programmes with the support of international actors, came to be considered the Government's strategy.⁷ To get round the GoC's refusal to make any significant changes to the strategy, and its insistence that debating public policy was beyond the remit of the LCB process, a new scenario of 'political fora' was created at social actors' instigation, which in practice soon got absorbed into the LCB agenda.

6 Authors' notes from National Aid and Human Rights Conference, Cartagena, 2–3 February 2007.

7 See *Acción Social* (2007a).

2.3.3 Going for Paris at a run: from the Bogotá Round Table to Accra

At the last International Round Table Conference on Aid, held in Bogotá in December 2007, the GoC announced its adherence to the PD. This development had its own trajectory, intertwined with the various strands of aid policy debates narrated above. The GoC had begun to engage with global aid coordination and effectiveness processes, starting with the Rome Declaration on aid harmonisation and coordination in 2003 and the Monterrey Consensus debates on development financing (Buchelli *et al.* 2007). The series of instruments with related aims which it designed and put into practice between 2003–7, such as the National System for International Aid, the Aid Strategy 2002–06 and incorporation of the latter into the National Development Plan 2006–10 (Departamento de Planeación Nacional 2007), were in part its response to these international aid processes.

The GoC had initially questioned the appropriateness of subscribing to the PD, on the grounds of its non-aid dependent MIC status, and from a sense that PD priorities and premises held scant relevance for countries such as Colombia. However, when donors – especially the European Union – began to increasingly invoke the PD in dialogue with the Colombian authorities, the GoC began to perceive it as an essential tool of the new aid architecture and to feel it was increasingly untenable for Colombia to stay outside the fold. Throughout 2007 it therefore convened events and commissioned analysis to examine minutely the pros and cons of adherence versus the alternative of continuing to coordinate aid via alternative mechanisms, principally the LCB dialogue space (Acción Social 2007b; Buchelli *et al.* 2007).

A report commissioned to this end (Buchelli with Gómez 2007) notes that although aid coordination has so far been incipient and fragmented, notable progress has been made in respect of ownership, ‘given the country’s status as a MIC’ (Buchelli and Gómez 2007: 10). However, ‘the greatest problems are in relation to alignment and in the relationships between Government and state institutions and between Government and donors’ (*ibid.*). The document warns against staying out of the PD on the basis that that would perpetuate ‘business as usual’: a continued lack of clear Government leadership of international aid in Colombia and the creation by donors of alternative spaces for aid coordination (*ibid.*: 13). The report strongly recommends adhering to the PD for two reasons: the utility of a formal coordination mechanism, and the legitimisation of the advances already made in relations with civil society and donors, both of which, the author insists, lack full confidence in the existing space, the LCB process (*ibid.*: 14).

The stress on the need for legitimisation of progress already made within the LCB process insinuates that the perceived lack of legitimacy of the LCB process as an aid coordination space is due to its home-grown nature and the lack of an underpinning *global* coordination framework; but also to its distinct purpose, and distortions that have arisen in practice:

The London-Cartagena process has not received due credit [but] has been utilised in the shadow of some of the aid coordination mechanisms introduced recently. This has produced a perverse effect: scenarios

intended for political purposes have been used to present technical instruments, like the Aid Strategy, rather than to debate the political orientation of aid-related strategies.

(*Ibid.*: 26)

Once Colombia had formally adopted the PD, the Government proceeded to develop a strategy for active participation in the Third High-Level Forum to be held in Accra in September 2008. It hosted the preparatory Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean (Gobierno de Colombia 2008) and took part for the first time in the OECD Paris Declaration monitoring survey (2008). The *Acción Social* back-to-office report after Accra described the GoC's 'active participation' and proudly listed the successes notched up there: Colombia returned from Accra as a member of the Working Group on Aid Effectiveness, the entity charged with the global implementation of the PD; having represented Latin American and Caribbean countries in the drafting process of the Accra Agenda for Action; and having co-versed with Switzerland in the Ownership Round Table, one of nine roundtables held at the High-Level Forum (*Acción Social* 2008a). It had also participated in the Round Table on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, 'bringing to that space the achievements attained in the London-Cartagena-Bogotá process, which was highlighted by the Round Table as a case of good practice' (*ibid.*: 2). Government representatives had made known Colombia's interest in hosting the next HLF, due to take place in 2011 (*ibid.*).

Through these roles played before and during Accra, the GoC used to the full the influence it had accumulated throughout the preparatory process, positioning on the agenda three areas it considered weak in the PD: the failure to take into account other actors beyond governments, such as Parliaments, local governments and civil society; the excessively North-South and LIC-oriented framing of the Declaration and lack of any consideration of MICs' particular characteristics; and the absence of any mention of South-South and trilateral aid which Colombia considers a high priority. Despite its claim that it was 'thanks to Colombia's participation in the drafting [of the Accra Agenda for Action, AAA] in representation of the region' that these issues appear, in fact for some time international as well as Colombian social organisations' debates on the PD had demanded recognition of civil society organisations' role as aid actors (ALOP 2008; Fernández 2008). Likewise, South-South aid, under various guises and names, has been a longstanding aspiration and practice throughout Latin America and particularly in Chile and Brazil, and had been much-debated in the preparatory Regional Consultation (Gobierno de Colombia 2008).

Post-Accra, the Government drew up an Implementation Plan based on the AAA (*Acción Social* 2009), which set out steps for attaining the goals agreed for 2010, further operationalising two firm convictions expressed to us by the Director of *Acción Social*. Firstly, 'Colombia must be an actor in aid debates in future' and secondly, 'rather than us having to adjust to the Paris Declaration principles, the Declaration needed to adjust to the political realities of countries like Colombia' (interview notes).

3 Putting Paris into practice in Bogotá

In our fieldwork, 16 months after adoption, we enquired into the effects that adhesion was having on the prior aid and policy dialogue scenario and on relations between the actors therein. By then, Colombia's adhesion to the PD had taken on certain contours. The GoC was carrying forward the PD process in parallel with the LCB process, the same government actors often cropping up in both sets of spaces. The LCB process had become a fairly sprawling, wide-reaching one in terms of both number and types of spaces it comprises and range and kind of actors involved. In contrast, the PD process was being carried out essentially in bilateral meetings between bilateral official aid agency representatives or aid technical staff based in Embassies, and government representatives from *Acción Social* and the Directorate of International Aid in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Acción Social* and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued working hard to get the special characteristics of MICs and the particular aid modalities of S-S and trilateral aid better reflected in the PD process as it unfolds (Maruri 2009). Helped by the reputation it had rapidly gained for sustaining a lasting and intensive tripartite aid and policy dialogue process that included civil society actors, it continued playing a protagonist role in the Aid Effectiveness Working Group and of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness. We present our findings here with particular reference to these contours.

3.1 Same principles, new framework

The Colombian government had already made progress independently in respect of some principles core to the PD, largely in spaces of the LC process. What are the effects of it formally committing itself and its donors to further progress on these, and within a new framework distinct from the LC process?

In the eyes of GoC respondents and also some Embassy and donor agency respondents, joining the club of aid-recipient countries has definitely generated benefits. These consist of closer relationships with certain donors, in some cases reflected in closer resemblance of donors' aid programmes to Colombia's public policy and budget priorities; more aid or more favourable aid packaging; and enhanced esteem for good aid management.

Colombia's relationship with certain key donors has got closer (notably Spain, which is second largest bilateral donor after the US – *Acción Social* 2008b) and considerably more aligned, both thematically and in terms of aid distribution across geographical and administrative regions. Sectoral budget support and basket funding mechanisms have been introduced by a handful of donors, some close to the Uribe administration and others sceptical about Government's possible controlling motives but forced towards budget support by their institutional policies. However, these moves are timid, lack broad endorsement from the rest of the G24, and tend to be focused on either the least controversial sectors such as environment, or the State's organs of

control such as the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office which, while not the Government's preferred target for aid and drastically under-funded by the State, are nonetheless important accessories to a democratic image.

Statements made in the course of preparing for Accra show that the GoC has made good use of the PD as a formal framework and lever with which to reinvigorate its demand for alignment of donor policies and resources behind its own vision of development and corresponding policy and budgetary framework. This vision entails a military solution to deep-rooted social and political conflicts, and correspondingly disproportionate military spending and under-funding of social sectors. From 2001–7 Colombia devoted 4.7 per cent of its GDP to defence, well above the 1.6 per cent average for the Americas and also well above the 2.9 per cent average in 2005 for 27 countries in conflict around the world (PODEC 2008: 9; Portafolio 2008). Defence spending for 2008 was equivalent to the total of health, education and environmental health put together and defence investments accounted for 65 per cent of total national government investments (PODEC 2008: 9). The GoC states rather more appealingly the case for national ownership and donor alignment around its development plans and budget:

In the interests of articulating aid flows with national aid priorities, defined through a process of consensus involving the international community, regional government and representatives of civil society in the framework of the International Aid Strategy 2007–2010, donors need to orient their aid more and more in keeping with the government sector.

(*Acción Social* 2008c: 1)

[The principle of] ownership, in a middle-income country with low aid dependence like Colombia, represents an especially good opportunity to *complement our own development planning and dynamism with the contributions forthcoming from international aid.*

(*Acción Social* 2008b: 2 – emphasis mine)

To *Acción Social's* satisfaction, EC humanitarian aid has been transferred to it for disbursement. This EC move has angered and distanced key humanitarian actors in the ONGI and Colombian NGO spheres. They refuse to accept funds disbursed by Government and much less by a programme of the Presidency of the Republic, even if originating from the EC, as this would compromise their autonomy from Government and their neutrality in the eyes of armed actors in some regions where they work. One government respondent offered evidence that alignment has become more palatable to donors as a result of public policy shifting in fields of high importance to them, in particular, in relation to the treatment of victims of human rights violations. Rather than a reflection on benefits from PD adoption, this is effectively an admission of the role played by the LCB process, where the relevant dialogue has taken place between government and human rights organisations defending victims, often acrimoniously, with donors acting as referees.

Acción Social attributes a putative rise – or at least sustained level – of aid flows to Colombia's adoption of the PD, all the more so given its lowering

expectations of aid increases to MICs. The putative rise in aid⁸ and its connection to PD adoption was however refuted by an official donor, and the short intervals between adoption in November 2007, the OECD survey (February–March 2008) and our fieldwork (February 2009) tend to support his position. The PD is being used by senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs actors and also the Inter-American Development Bank to support the framing of aid to Colombia as an international public good, which may help sustain current levels or increase aid in the future.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims further progress in enhancing aid effectiveness since the adoption of the PD, associating this with its membership of the club. The PD framework is said to universalise and formalise the Government's practice of drawing up Memoranda of Understanding with individual donors, and, uniquely, to provide indicators that enable Colombia to *demonstrate* the progress it was already making in terms of ownership and alignment (PNUD 2007). Government aid officials have enthusiastically scaled the steep learning curve posed by participation in high-profile international events such as the HLF in Accra.

The mechanisms for monitoring PD progress have permitted the GoC to at last gather information on inflows of official aid that has proved elusive despite its repeated efforts since 2004. This elusiveness to date is explained differently by different actor groups: Government blames donors' reluctance to provide it transparently, whereas most donors claim it is impossible to adjust their data to the data categories that the GoC sought to use. However, several donors do suspect that repeated requests for detailed data on volumes, destinations, partner organisations and end-beneficiaries mask political or 'security'-related considerations that could compromise the safety of partners and programmes, and hence acknowledge their reluctance to provide them. While Government actors treat data on aid flows as grist to the Government's aid effectiveness mill, donor actors see them as grist to the Government's control mill. As proof of the latter, one donor agency reminded us that when the government aid coordination office (the precursor to *Acción Social*) began its attempts to systematise aid in 2004 it wanted to introduce government approval of every single official and INGO aid project. Since the INGO aid flows which Government repeatedly berates INGOs for withholding are in fact mostly publicly available, it is unsurprising that some donor and NGO actors view this as a political issue, patently about control, 'sovereignty' and authority, rather than a technical issue of information availability.

But the degree to which Colombian priorities are reflected in donors' aid programmes is clearly disappointing the Government. It formally complained to one donor in 2008 for drawing up its aid strategy through its normal consultation process and in so doing, treating the Government as just one among several actors to be consulted. The 2008 OECD PD monitoring survey

8 *Acción Social* (2008a) claims that ODA to Colombia has risen by 90 per cent in 2004–6. Even allowing for a large inflow in the form of the non-military component of the US's aid package Plan Colombia, this figure seems likely to reflect increased reporting rather than purely increased aid.

took place too soon after adoption to capture progress since adoption, but reveals a very weak base for the indicators of percentage of aid channelled through central government (one-third, of which only 60 per cent is on-budget) and percentage relying on national auditing systems only (1.5 per cent) (*Acción Social* 2008b). *Acción Social* laments the lack of signals from donors that they will act fast to improve these. Donors are not at all rushing to channel their aid through *Acción Social* or national auditing systems. Some (Spain, UNDP) appear to be deliberately counteracting the Government's centralising tendency by promoting decentralised aid to regional and Departmental (i.e. provincial) government at the same time as participating in highly centralised basket funding mechanisms. Others expressed major reservations about national systems, in particular the lack of parliamentary oversight of the budget of *Acción Social*, which is a Presidential programme rather than a state or government organ; and serious accountability flaws in the Congress which undermine this organ's budgetary oversight role.

A final point here relates an observation made by the Director of *Acción Social*. She called it a 'paradox' that 'countries with weak institutions [...] already have a much higher percentage [of aid] channelled through government than Colombia' (interview notes). This may reflect a deliberate donor safety mechanism rather than any paradox. All donor agency representatives interviewed revealed explicitly or implicitly an interpretation of ownership that is anathema to the GoC's interpretation of the PD ownership principle, which they seem to regard as overly literal. Their own view is that, PD or no PD, donor agencies legitimately reserve the absolute right to determine the nature and destination of their aid programmes. Most also made it plain that their agency has no intention of shifting to channel its funds through *Acción Social*, or to using exclusively national auditing systems, because it does not consider them transparent enough and/or free enough from political (i.e. Presidential) influence. They seem to see themselves as working in the spirit of the PD rather than bound by its indicators. Thus, figuratively speaking, donors kept their fingers crossed behind their backs while committing themselves to PD principles in the case of Colombia. These facts, combined with Colombia's relatively good prior standing in respect of PD indicators, raise the question of how far its adoption of the PD responded to *donors'* need to count some MDG and PD success stories among their aid recipients.

3.2 Two processes for the price of one

An argument advanced by Hoyos (Presidential Advisor for Social Action, to whom *Acción Social* reports, and chief architect of the country's new internal aid architecture) in favour of adhering to the PD was the need for further *technical* improvements. He distinguished this from the LCB process which he referred to as 'a convergence between Government and civil society', thus signalling that the two processes would fulfil distinct needs, both valid (*Acción Social* 2007b: 2). Ironically, given longstanding Government and donor complaints of too many meetings to cover, at the time of our research there were two aid policy dialogue processes running in parallel, meeting and overlapping at certain junctures, and involving virtually all the same institutions

and many of the same people – although where their presence is large enough, donor governments tend to be represented by diplomats in LCB spaces and by aid technicians in PD spaces.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, the LCB process has had to adapt its mechanisms, procedures and agenda in the light of the adoption of the PD, in an effort to render these compatible with the dynamics of the PD process, without at the same time denaturing itself as a space for policy and political dialogue on aid priorities in a country in conflict. The 2009 LCB agenda shows the results of social actors' efforts to deal with this challenge by strategically constructing points of convergence. It includes a critical appraisal of the MDGs from an equity perspective, given the current economic crisis; and an analysis of the aims and impacts to date of the 2007–10 Aid Strategy in view of the end of the current Presidential term in August 2010.

Such has been the primacy of social actors in forging and keeping open these spaces that the term most familiar in UN parlance for them, 'civil society participation', does not apply at all. The LCB process, especially in latter years, is a case of Government and the international community participating in a project owned and propelled by civil society actors, who have had to negotiate very hard and skilfully at particular junctures for its survival. But although they have been the main force driving the process forward, social actors have not so much pushed their own agenda as insisted on the need for the international community to contribute to peace-building, respect for human rights and the strengthening of the rule of law as the foundations of the aid programme Colombia needs, as enshrined in the Declarations. The G24 has generally felt its concerns fairly reflected by social actors, but its members are simultaneously bound by the diplomatic imperative of responding to the Government's agenda, and held to account by the emphases of their own governments' aid strategies.

Even before the adoption of the PD, donors found this an equilibrium difficult to maintain, as evinced by the frictions and intense debates generated when Government unilaterally produced a new aid strategy for 2007–10. Viewed through the prism of the ownership principle of the PD – which Colombia had not yet adopted but about which it was already deliberating – such a manoeuvre made more elusive still the donor actors' equilibrium. The ownership, alignment and harmonisation principles tend to narrow donors' room for manoeuvre, as well as the space for political dialogue including social actors. One G24 actor stated his predicament thus:

Acción Social always wants everything done through it. [My country] tries to explain why it works as it does. It's about applying the Paris principles in a context of conflict and polarisation [...] (emphasis spoken in original).

He added that his country's line is to work with the State and the Government and to keep open channels for aid policy dialogue, '[...] in other words, to combine aid and diplomacy' (*ibid.*).

The PD, then, was not introduced into a vacuum, but against the background of the antecedents, accumulated baggage and experience of the LCB process.

This remains alive and kicking, held up by donor representatives as a vital political dialogue space that must be maintained and, some say, strengthened. Government held it up in Accra as an exemplary case of coordination between Government and civil society actors, as discussed further below. As for whether Government aims to retain the political nature of aid dialogue and the prominence of the LCB process, the Director of *Acción Social* says:

The political essence of London-Cartagena and the G24 must not be forgotten. Aid was an excuse: the role of the international community in Colombia is political. Paris is not about politics. As we move forward, things will be done more technically. Politics will carry less weight.

While the Government's moves to technically sort out aid in Colombia are generally welcomed, many donors and social actors are sceptical as to the Government's motives in adopting the PD, and view the developments in aid effectiveness since November 2007 as little different from what would have happened without the PD. They infer that, notwithstanding possible motives relating to control, 'more aid' and legitimacy, one covert but key Government motive for PD adoption was to undermine or cut down to size a LC process that had got out of (Government's) hand.

Various evidence was cited in support of this view. First, when in an LCB space social actors suggested that the LCB process could benefit from the application of the Paris principle of democratic ownership in respect of debates on aid and public policy, Presidential advisor Hoyos responded that that was dealt with in the PD process. This was read as implying his desire to subsume important elements of LCB within the PD process. Second, the high-profile announcement of PD adoption was made at the third (Bogotá) International Round Table of the LCB process despite the decision having been taken some time previously, a move alleged by social actors to have deliberately stolen the limelight from the key cast of the LCB in which social actors feature large. Third, the LCB process is said to have significantly lost its political edge since the PD came along, on top of the longer-standing shift in power dynamics in the Government's favour that has happened within it since 2003. This shift is reflected in the fact that the Bogotá Declaration, although retaining some important points from the previous two Declarations relating to human rights and conflict, evinces strong and successful influencing efforts by Government, and G24 representatives insist that its real strength lies not in its content but in the fact that the Government could be persuaded, at this Third meeting, to endorse it at all. We cite here the view of a Government actor, adding in square brackets in roman social actors' and critical donors' interpretation of its subtext:

Policy and political dialogue is always part of a State's international relations [The existence of the LCB policy dialogue doesn't indicate anything unusual or shameful about the aid and public policy context here]. *The [PD] monitoring survey revealed that donors have a considerable political role, but since the volume of their aid is small, this is not a given* [The extent and breadth of this role, exerted in the LCB process, we have so far tolerated out of good will; but we now have an official aid framework that they too have endorsed that enables us to re-orient aid dialogue away from political issues].

Although donors' political analysis is considered by donor actors and social actors to be lacking in some important ways, there is a perception among donors that DP adoption, and the related positioning of the MDGs in the Aid Strategy 2007–10, were tremendously skilful manoeuvres by the Uribe government: 'The limitation of the PD in the Colombian context is that it's framed for the MDGs, which in Colombia, most donors agree, should be treated as minimums, not maximums, since Col was already close to achieving several of them'. Government's attempt to shift the international community's attention from uncomfortable issues like human rights to the MDGs is seen to have had the unintended effect of prompting several high-profile and sceptical donors to affirm this view about the MDGs and to come out and say clearly why they are in Colombia. Less optimistic interviewees opined that since the PD process started up, human rights issues are getting left in the LCB process spaces, which have been downgraded as a consequence of PD adoption. While Colombian social actors' key task now is to ensure that they do not stay there, most of them have such limited knowledge of the PD that its adoption, and the tendency to ghettoise 'their' issues within the LCB process, will automatically disadvantage them and dilute the overall focus on human rights achieved to date.

The European NGO platform PODEC sums up its position on the introduction of the PD in Colombia as follows:

In Colombia there is already a tripartite space which includes Government and state, the international community (G24), and national and international civil society organisations (the Cartagena Consensus, DIAL and PODEC): the London-Cartagena- Bogotá Process. This is the ideal policy space for adapting and taking forward the [most relevant] recommendations of the Accra Agenda for Action.

(PODEC 2008: 13)

While in our interviews government and isolated donor voices interpreted the PD process as enhancing and reinforcing the LCB process, many donors and social actors involved in the LCB process agreed with PODEC. They insisted on the need for the LCB process to continue and, wherever possible, to absorb elements of the PD agenda rather than be absorbed by it.

All in all, it is hardly surprising that the PD appeared to be an opportunity to 'restore' the technical character to aid dialogue: aid as MDG-focused international development aid, devoid of the language of human rights, conflict and peace, and the domain principally of governments. To some extent this has happened: some interviewees from all three sectors consider that LCB has lost some of its dynamism and political edge. Decision-making within has become concentrated on a few actors and participation has been reined in. Social actors, especially those based in the regions, feel their advocacy opportunities have been reduced to particular events in the LCB calendar which are so large as to virtually preclude meaningful participation.

3.3 The democratic credentials of ‘civil society participation’

In holding up LCB as a model, Government has wisely and accurately referred to it as coordination between government and civil society actors, not as ‘participation’ of civil society actors in a government-inspired process, a framing which would have accredited to Government more than its due. Even put thus, the prior experience of a unique tripartite aid policy dialogue in the form of LCB is winning plaudits and democratic legitimacy credentials for the Government, in scenarios as high-level and visible as the Third High-Level Forum at Accra. Social actors comment on the ironies of the Government profiling itself as a PD signatory with something special to offer by dint of the LCB experience, while at home it is the only LCB member who puts no enthusiasm into it. Chagrin is understandable on the part of the social actors who have fought so hard against the GoC to open and keep open at critical moments the dialogue spaces and disposition that constitute the London-Cartagena process.

While some more technocratic donors such as the Inter-American Development Bank stress the technical aid coordination merits of LCB to date, even they acknowledge its value in keeping democratic governance, human rights and international humanitarian law issues on the debating agenda, and enabling the GoC to assume leadership among MICs on these issues. Government itself, responding to the OECD 2008 PD progress monitoring survey, reports against the principle ‘Mutual Accountability’ that ‘[i]n Colombia, the London-Cartagena-Bogotá process has provided a forum for government to periodically inform its aid partners and civil society about aid developments’ (*Acción Social* 2008b: 13). It is conscious, then, of the need to demonstrate its accountability credentials and its democratic credentials, to this end casting the human rights organisations that spearhead the LCB process as classic civil society accountability-demanders that exert democratic checks and balances on the state.

On a more constructive note, some Government actors have learnt through the LCB process the value of the participation of social actors in debates on aid-related themes, including human rights. While most of them prefer controlled participation, some sincerely recognise the value of a much more autonomous form of engagement by civil society actors.

Now the Accra High-Level Forum has deepened the ownership principle to mean democratic ownership – embracing broader concepts of legitimacy than simple government legitimacy – and has positioned social actors as legitimate interlocutors on aid policy issues. In the light of these developments, civil society and donor commentators who have observed with chagrin the political and legitimacy capital that Government has made by – as they see it – touting the LCB experience in international scenarios, foresee the Government possibly getting hoist with its own petard, having to accept social actors as legitimate interlocutors not only in the LCB process but also in more technocratic and effectiveness-oriented policy dialogue about aid in Colombia.

3.4 Distinctive characteristics: an aid-providing, middle-income, southern signatory

Prior to Accra, *Acción Social* set itself the challenge of:

exerting an influence in the spaces provided by the DAC and the OECD to get international instruments adapted, broadened and adjusted to reflect the realities of MICs, and highlight their role and perspectives in the new international aid architecture.

(*Acción Social* 2008c: 1)

These realities were debated centrally in a seminar convened by the Colombian government in June 2007 to deliberate over adoption. Some of the other Latin American MICs present – in particular Argentina – advocated vociferous participation as a MIC, while others – Brazil, Chile – dismissed the PD as irrelevant to them, as MIC donors rather than significant aid recipients (*Acción Social* 2007b). This reflects a prevailing perception of the PD among the participant countries as a lever for increasing aid, rather than as a framework for donors and recipients to hold each other to account in achieving more effective aid. The same interpretation is evident in *Acción Social's* assertion, referred to above, of the tendency for aid to MICs to decline unless they signed the PD, and in the satisfaction it expresses at what it takes to be PD-related increases in aid inflows.

The successes notched up by the GoC before and during the Accra High-Level Forum amounted to a phenomenal act of positioning by a country which, ten months earlier, had not signed up to the PD, and had never taken part in a global-level DAC meeting before. In this, Colombia demonstrated its high technical and institutional capacity and sheer sophistication in comparison to many southern lower-income PD signatory countries.

Highlighted in most policy statements and official positions related to Colombia's PD adhesion and Accra preparations is Colombia's status as a provider of South-South aid⁹ and triangular aid,¹⁰ also mentioned by most of our interviewees as a key aspect of Colombia's positioning *vis-à-vis* the PD. This self-framing as a country 'in the process of transition to being predominantly an aid provider' (*Acción Social* 2007b: 1) has generated considerable rhetoric from the GoC and the PD club overall, at Accra and in the AAA, about the need for due recognition and future development of emerging modalities of South-South and triangular aid. At the time of our research there appeared to have been little concrete action to match this, except Colombia chairing a Task Team on South-South Cooperation as an emerging aid

9 South-South cooperation is defined as 'the practice of technical co-operation particularly led by Middle-Income Countries as both providers and recipients of development assistance' (www.oecd.org/document/51/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_43385523_1_1_1_1,00.html, accessed 18 November 2009).

10 Triangular aid is defined as 'development assistance from traditional donors executed by southern donors (often in the form of technical co-operation)' (OECD 2009: 141).

modality, created at Accra largely in response to Colombia's lobbying; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Director of International Aid attending speaking engagements abroad on the future of South-South aid (Maruri 2009).¹¹

We gathered anecdotal evidence of a limited amount of South-South and triangular aid provided by Colombia, and concrete evidence of one new South-South aid programme provided by Colombia to the Caribbean Basin (Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d.), but could not ascertain the amounts or proportions these modalities represent in relation to the national budget or aid inflows. Neither was it clear to us whether there were any less visible benefits from the provision of South-South or triangular aid (for example, relating to tax relief or procurement concessions) which might help to explain Colombia's enthusiastic championing of them. The dearth of concrete information made us question whether this framing might be largely aspirational and intentional, rather than actual, at that point.

These two dimensions of Colombia's positioning prior to and since PD adoption, as both an aid-needy MIC and an aid-provider, are somewhat puzzling because strategically speaking they seem to point in contradictory directions. On the one hand, in policy statements and official positions and in our interviews with government actors, emphasis is placed on Colombia's and other Latin American countries' MIC status so as to highlight the substantial and special aid needs to which this status gives rise, linking it to high levels of socioeconomic inequality and geographically- or ethnically-defined pockets of extreme poverty resistant to policy solutions. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on Colombia as an actual or potential provider of South-South aid and trilateral aid so as to illustrate the country's considerable economic, institutional and technical resources and justify a non-subordinate position in the international aid scenarios which it is entering for the first time. The aid-needy MIC framing emphasises factors that it is hoped will prompt PD-led donors to sustain or increase aid to Colombia. The South-South and trilateral aid-provider framing appears oblivious to the potential application of the PD to bind Colombia itself as an aid provider, and treats it, rather, as an international space that Colombia can use to show its credentials and project a favourable image.

This apparent contradiction disappears if we think of Colombia desiring to benefit from the advantages of aid receipt (because after all, providing triangular aid is also aid receipt) while, in terms of aid power relations, steadfastly avoiding the subordinate status assigned to typical aid recipients and asserting itself in international scenarios as having a relatively high level of institutional and technical development. For now, donors' aid strategies appear to be increasingly cognisant of Colombia's MIC characteristics; but this may reflect earlier DAC recognition of the peculiarities of aid-giving to MICs (see for

11 By the time of publication of this report there were more signs of action, among others the High-Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation in Bogotá hosted by the GoC in March 2010. (www.accionsocial.gov.co/contenido/contenido.aspx?conID=4554&catID=127 accessed 26 March 2010).

example Eyben *et al.* 2004), and in any case is accompanied by increased cognisance, too, of the armed internal conflict and complex human rights and humanitarian emergency, a development less favourable to the Government's aims. However, there is no doubt that Colombia's leadership on the MIC, South-South and triangular cooperation issues before and at Accra have gained it international profile and influence.

The adoption of the Paris Declaration in November 2007 opened up a fissure in Colombia's aid debate. On one side of the fissure is situated the existing political and policy dialogue, which focuses on the aid priorities appropriate for a country in conflict like Colombia, and in which social actors have played a crucial role to date. On the other side is situated the debate on more technical aspects of official aid, expressed in the principles of ownership, harmonisation and alignment that characterise the PD, and in which the principal protagonists are Governments.

3.5 Colombian agendas behind the Paris agenda

To the question of why the Colombian government signed up to the Paris Declaration, three main GoC 'agendas' were pointed to by our interviewees: a desire to control aid; a quest to increase aid flows; and a drive to boost the government's legitimacy on international, Latin American and domestic levels. The fourth most prominent reason, cited only by GoC interviewees, is a desire to hold Northern governments to account, using the mutuality of the PD to turn the tables on them in terms of alignment and accountability; the fifth, a desire to enhance aid effectiveness.

3.5.1 Control over aid in a context of armed conflict and conflict denial

Most aid-recipient governments are keen to control the aid they receive; this is the origin of the alignment principle in the PD. Control over aid in the Colombian case is not only about increasing aid volumes channelled through the national budget, although many cite this as a motive also. Colombia is mired in an internal armed conflict. The existence of the conflict was publicly denied by the Government in 2005 in a communiqué to the G24, in an effort to strip the armed insurgency of all political and social legitimacy, remove any justification for the application of humanitarian principles to parties and victims in the conflict, and focus the non-military aid efforts and policy dialogue of donors on the social sectors. Uribe's government is 'trying to run a right-wing agenda in a difficult neighbourhood' as one donor put it, and 'has made the war on terror its signature tune'. As such, it needs to utilise every opportunity to align donors' policies and funds with its own politico-military strategy. Moreover, by denying the armed conflict and stressing its war against drug trafficking in its international relations, it risked losing the benefits of the principles of aid relations unless it also framed itself as a worthy aid recipient with policies with which donors could align their own. Unless donors heavily increased their aid and human resources, in order to align with GoC policies they would have to withdraw funding from the areas of humanitarian response, human rights

defence and attention to victims of the conflict, with which Government is uncomfortable, and home in on the MDGs and the much narrower conception of development they embody.

Thus, the control of aid sought by the GoC is not a straightforward commitment to greater alignment in the interests of greater aid effectiveness. It is a control which aspires to align aid with public policy and budget priorities that have proved controversial among the very aid donors; and one aspect of it is the undermining or weakening of the LCB process as a key site of negotiation on aid and public policy priorities.

In substantiation of this latter point, of the 18-paragraph London Declaration (G24 2003) the GoC contrived and largely managed to focus donors' attention on just two of them, the ones about aid. This effectively 'kept the international community in its place', their aid programmes being so small that orienting the relationship towards aid afforded them little influence.

The 'more aid' motivation was cited by donor and government respondents alike. In 2006 and 2007 the GoC received signals from certain donors (Netherlands and IDB) that adoption would be looked on favourably because it was in keeping with the directions of their own aid programmes and would lead to more aid as well as more alignment. It perceived that its early attempts to 'get its house in order' by setting up *Acción Social* and the National Aid System had been rewarded by increased flows, although the causal relationship between these moves and increased flows is not clear and the increases are anyway surely less in real terms than statistics gathered for the OECD PD monitoring survey suggest.

3.5.2 A bid for legitimacy

The legitimacy case for signing the PD was foremost in many interviewees' views. The GoC is seen as having acted to increase its legitimacy on the international level, particularly with reference to the UN system and 'clubs' of Northern governments; on the regional – Latin America and Caribbean – level; and domestically in relation to the other two parties to the LCB process, civil society actors and the diplomatic and donor corps. On the international stage, the Uribe government's reputation in the UN Human Rights Council was parlous, thanks to the diligence of Colombian and international HRs organisations in exposing government responsibility and complicity for systematic and widespread human rights violations; it had recently gained the status of the country with the second highest number of IDPs; depending on definitions, it had arguably been in a state of war longer than any country in the world yet had recently further complicated its international relations with other governments by denying the existence of internal armed conflict or humanitarian crisis. It had worked systematically to limit the power and reduce the role of the United Nations agencies in and on Colombia.

Moreover, the Uribe government is seen as having inherited a severe legitimacy deficit dating from the (1994–98) Samper government, when the extent of penetration of state and government institutions by the drugs trade

came to light. The subsequent Pastrana government (1998–2002) addressed this problem by starting to make the ‘global public goods’ case for international cooperation, especially in the field of counter-narcotics and peace negotiations with the armed insurgency. The current Foreign Minister Jaime Bermúdez has led a concerted drive to boost Colombia’s standing internationally, actively seeking out scenarios that offer opportunities for this, including the PD, the International Labour Organisation, and the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), to which he offered Colombia as one of the first countries to undergo the new Universal Peer Review mechanism.¹² Colombia is even considering requesting membership of the DAC soon. Having some track record in the emergent fields of South-South aid and trilateral aid, it could expect to command some respect in this donors’ club. An additional advantage of positioning itself in the international aid scene is that Colombian social actors, detrimental to the Uribe government’s reputation in the international fora centred on the UN Human Rights Council, have no presence in or knowledge of the international aid scene. That *Acción Social* officials summed up Colombia’s performance at Accra by stating with satisfaction ‘We are clearly an actor in the global aid architecture now’, seems to confirm that Colombia joined the PD out of this aspiration.

Since the right-wing Uribe government assumed power Colombia has lost friends and allies across a Latin America that was markedly taking a turn to the left. This is due to Uribe’s closeness to the Bush administration and involvement in the US’s ‘war on terror’ discourse and practice – with all that meant for human rights violations and lack of respect for international borders in its own internal counter-insurgency operations. But it also reflects the contrast between Uribe’s style of government and those of left-wing leaders in many other Latin American countries. Colombia’s reputation in the Organisation of American States was suffering from numerous human rights-related legal actions against the Colombian state brought to Inter-American Commission and Court. The Inter-American Development Bank strongly supported Colombia’s adoption of the PD partly as an opportunity to mend fences and assume leadership at the Latin American level by joining, a proposition that has been borne out by events since November 2007. Preparations for Colombia’s participation in the Accra High-Level Forum which started as soon as the PD was adopted, were approached by *Acción Social* officials as ‘an opportunity to break onto the Latin American aid scene, where Colombia had never had a presence’.

Domestically, since 2003 the GoC is considered to have lost legitimacy relative to Colombian social actors as a result of the nature and dynamics of the LCB process. Colombian social actors have proven adept at applying their political skills to extract concessions in this political field; and the G24 has so far resisted Government’s attempts to make LCB a process of aid policy dialogue rather than political dialogue. Adopting the PD offered Government the chance

12 In the December 2008 UNHCR Colombia’s Universal Peer Review went badly for it: the reviewers’ report was not very critical but the discussion of it in the Council, led by Japan as the current President of the G24, was highly critical and a strong declaration was issued.

to tip the balance of dialogue back towards the technical terrain, where social actors are less qualified and – at least until Accra put civil society onto the PD map – their role could anyway be legitimately curtailed with respect to Governments' and donors' roles. The fact that at the time of our fieldwork, six months after the issuing of the Accra Agenda for Action with its call for a central 'civil society' role in the PD process, there was still no tripartite space for the PD process and instead social actors had demanded the LCB process include some meetings on the subject, would seem to bear out this proposition.

3.5.3 Holding wayward donors to account

A motivation given by only GoC aid officials was that the mutuality embodied in the PD offered the GoC a way to hold donor governments to account for the first time. *Acción Social* officials reported that the unit planned to centrally involve donors in a seminar it would host on Accountability in July 2009, to challenge them on the way they tend to implement their own programmes in Colombia instead of working through Colombian implementing agencies. For Foreign Ministry officials the PD opens the prospect of 'saying to donors, your aid agency has committed itself to the Paris principles; why don't you act in accordance with them here?'. Given that at times government figures have expressed anger at the way donors as well as social actors have called it to account in various spaces of the LCB process particularly in relation to human rights, there is every reason to assume that Government saw in the PD a way to turn the tables on the donors, and in spaces of donors' own creation.

3.5.4 More effective aid

And so we come to aid effectiveness, the fifth and almost least-cited reason for Colombia to have adopted the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. According to one social actor, 'Hoyos [the Presidential Advisor] adores order and technocracy'. Beyond personal traits, USAID reported that *Acción Social* was keen to implement USAID programmes itself rather than have them implemented by expensive implementing agencies, USAID's normal practice, because that would enhance effectiveness as more aid would go to end-beneficiaries. More broadly, the Government's prior and ongoing measures to organise aid and systematically assess its quantity, orientation and relation to public policy, do suggest that the concern with making it more effective, foisted upon the Uribe government in 2003 by donors in the form of an invitation to the London Round Table, has become 'owned' by Colombia too. But that these measures were largely put in place *before* Colombian government aid officials had even heard of the DP, by their own admission, does suggest that a concern with aid effectiveness was not the foremost reason for the Colombian government's adoption of the PD.

4 Conclusions

We have provided a detailed picture of what is happening in aid circles in Colombia, the historical background and existing aid relationships in which actions relating to the Paris Declaration are being played out. We have done so from the diverse perspectives of interviewees and authors situated in all three actor groupings involved in the LCB process and/or the Paris Declaration process. In this final section we bring the foregoing account to bear on the questions and concerns that underpin this research.

Colombia signed up to the PD at a moment when it had recently succeeded in imposing its own agenda over those of most donors in at least three significant contentious matters: the revision of the aid strategy in 2006, the gradual erosion of the image and influence of human rights-focused UN agencies in Colombia, and denial of the existence of an armed internal conflict. Never, it seemed, had the Uribe government less need to acquiesce to a donor agenda.

We posited above, after Eyben *et al.* (2004), that a country's aid relations and behaviour need to be understood in the wider context of international relations, and that a realist approach to international relations assumes that each country pursues its own interest, using aid among other mechanisms to that end. In adopting the PD in November 2007, Colombia was pursuing its own interests in two dimensions. As an actor on the international stage, for a range of reasons core to the missions of most relevant multilateral and regional inter-governmental organisations, the Uribe administration needed to make more friends, on the continent or further afield. As a domestic actor the Government, although elected and enjoying reportedly high ratings in opinion polls, had to contend with an increasingly organised, highly capable and well-connected set of civil society actors whom it perceived and treated as its political opponents, and a diplomatic corps that openly questioned its commitment to democratic principles, international human rights humanitarian law. The Government's actions need to be understood in the light of these pressing international, regional and domestic interests.

As for the role of the international community in Colombia's adoption of the PD,¹³ our research indicates that many supported the idea only by default, as a necessary consistency with their governments' pro-PD positions. Diplomatic missions and aid agency staff do not strongly believe that Colombia's PD membership will lead to significant improvements in national systems, transparency, the elimination of corruption or other features of good governance of aid. Where donors actively supported Colombia's decision to sign up, the range of reasons runs from strongly self-interested to altruistic. At the strongly self-interested extreme, an explanatory factor lying beyond the scope of our study may be that it suits donor governments to maintain or even strengthen aid relations with a country in which it has strong or growing

13 It did cross our minds to ask ourselves whether donors could have *refused* Colombia entry: whether there is any mechanism at the disposal of signatories, or of DAC members, for avoiding the entry of particular aid recipients into a forum such as the Paris fold.

commercial interests. If the PD is the direction in which aid relations are moving, it does not hurt – and may well help – powerful trade partners who provide a little aid, to welcome this trade partner into the mainstream of aid relations.

Another cynical explanation, but aid- rather than trade-related, relates to the current strong donor imperative to target aid towards poverty reduction and demonstrate their impact in relation to it via mechanisms connected to OECD and DAC processes, principally the MDGs. In most of the countries where they operate, the PD is the ideal framework for pursuing these objectives. These donor approaches may have been simply ‘read across’ into Colombia, with varying degrees of concern and or awareness over contextual differences, in a drive to meet donors’ own aid-related commitments.

More positively, many donors have a history of active concern about the kind of aid demanded by successive Colombian governments. The aid demands reflect politically-charged denialism about the country’s human rights situation and, more lately, about the internal armed conflict and its manifold consequences. The London Round Table was first moment of concerted donor action on this concern, and has led to more formal aid-focused relationships with Colombia over the period since 2003. The PD being the current aid framework that Northern governments work within, its adoption appears logical and consequential.

A few donor actors may have been acting according to their more-than-averagely sophisticated political analysis. While more-than-averagely aware of possible cynical motives on the GoC’s side, these donors are also well aware of the GoC’s sensitivity over sovereignty and criticism and play their critical cards carefully. They may have viewed the Government’s decision to join the PD as, in the bigger picture, a fairly benign development. They might even have envisaged the possibility that it would incidentally free up the LCB space for valuable policy-influencing on issues relating to peace, conflict, the reduction of the inequality that in their analysis lies at the roots of the internal armed conflict. Or, depending on their confidence in the PD and AAA mechanisms, they may hold out hope that Colombia’s entry will permit them to exercise leverage for a reorientation of aid in ways more appropriate to a context of armed conflict and inequality, not least through the current and future development of proposed PD offshoots such as the DAC’s ‘Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations’ (OECD 2007).

Returning to the citation from ABColombia with which we justified our interest in this research topic, we end by summing up what our findings imply for Colombian social actors, official aid donors and diplomatic missions party to aid dialogues who work to hold the Colombian state to account over the causes and consequences of the internal armed conflict and related human rights situation.

We have argued that donors are now subject to an attempt to push them (back) into a technocratic corner, with a purely technical role. Their political leverage potential is at risk because the LCB spaces in which they can fuel it – through gleaning grounded information and orientation from social actors – and

exert it – through more or less frank dialogue with government aid, human rights and conflict specialists – are at risk. On other hand, the risk to donor leverage is limited, because their political influence has always outweighed their aid volumes. Moreover, as long as their trade relationships remain stable, the broad if limited influence these Northern governments enjoy by dint of their commercial and defence relationships is probably safe.

Internationally, the legitimacy gains the GoC is making as result of PD membership are considerable, and help to tip the power balance in the tripartite relationship in favour of the GoC. This hampers the continuous efforts made by some G24 representatives to sound international alarms about Colombia in inter-governmental circles and with their own Foreign Ministries in relation to peace, human rights, international humanitarian law and conflict. On other hand, it is recognised in inter-governmental circles – for instance the UN Human Rights Council of December 2008 (ABColumbia 2010) that human rights concerns are far from resolved.

Nationally, too, the GoC is making legitimacy gains which would tend to further disadvantage both critical G24 members and social actors in spaces like LCB. Social actors will need the support of these critical G24 members more than ever to manage this. The more critical donor actors in Colombia seem poised to hold out for LCB continuation and reinvigoration, and keep playing down the PD in relation to LCB. They seem unlikely to be blinded to political realities or beholden to the GoC by the prospect of an aid partner government scoring highly in MDG or PD commitments. They have in their favour the fact that fragile states and conflict issues are becoming more and more central to aid agendas everywhere and therefore increasingly impossible to keep off-bounds for international donors, however uncomfortable they are for the GoC. It is to be hoped that donors' learning from cases like Colombia might lead to enhanced attention to political analysis in PD application, and also to further work within the DAC to adapt the PD appropriately to atypical cases – including atypical kinds of state 'fragility' such as we find in Colombia. The strongest message from this research to donors – albeit an oft-repeated one – is: ignore political realities at your peril, especially in a complex and conflict-prone context such as Colombia.

For social actors as well, the undermining or reduction of the LCB process threatens to marginalise or diminish them and their efforts. This risk is all the greater given that – at least at the time of our research – social actors were under-informed about PD, in relation to the importance it was acquiring for Government and the G24. The social actors who seemed to be most aware of and involved in PD-related debates – while certainly not apolitical or lacking in capacity for political analysis and manoeuvring – were not the most radical actors with the strongest political-opposition identities and the highest profiles. For international NGOs, Government's PD adoption – and the way this has entailed foregrounding the LCB experience in glowing terms – potentially complicates their advocacy work on Colombia. It could be seen to undermine key advocacy arguments advanced by the international NGOs: that the Uribe government lacks a poverty focus, rejects international mechanisms of state accountability, and spurns democratic dialogue and dissent.

If Colombian social actors get up to speed on the PD they can make it work for them and their issues. The Accra Agenda for Action offers an opportunity: with careful brinkmanship, social actors such as the Alliance can effectively invoke the AAA's legitimisation of civil society's involvement in aid and policy dialogue generally and in the pursuit of PD principles specifically. Their international NGO partners can help them master the PD and aid debates in general by sharing knowledge and experience from their own policy units and aid programmes in other more traditionally aid-dependent regions of the world. One critical condition for international NGOs working in Colombia to be taken seriously in this would be for their policy messages on aid to drop the call for 'more aid' in favour of a consistent call for 'better aid' – but this is in any case a natural development against a backdrop of OECD governments cutting public spending and slashing aid budgets. Colombian and international social organisations well-versed in rights-based approaches to development can even turn the PD into an opportunity to further discourses of and respect for rights. The Alliance has already started to go that way, by introducing into the LCB 2009 agenda a workshop on 'The MDGs from an equity perspective', which it used to push an economic, social and cultural rights approach to the MDGs.

The current conjuncture, viewed from this perspective, shows that civil society advocacy has worked, on some levels at least. That the GoC needed to repair its international image by joining the PD is largely due to Colombian social actors' labours, with support from members of the G24 and from international NGO partners. The wide reach and depth of aid policy debates today means that even if the MDGs now take centre-stage as GoC would have them do, human rights, international humanitarian law, conflict and peace will not disappear. The GoC needs to recognise, likewise, that with themes of state fragility, conflict and peace-building ascending the donor agenda the world over, these themes are not going to quietly wither away from donors' relationships and priorities in Colombia. Quite the opposite. They will endure or rise in prominence in Colombian aid policy debates, PD or no PD, and no longer solely or mainly thanks to the LCB process and the struggles of Colombian human rights activists and accountability claimants.

Annex 1 List of interviews conducted

Government of Colombia

Tatiana García and Teresa Camacho, Directorate of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Sandra Alzate, Director, and Juan Sebastián Estrada, International Aid Advisor, *Acción Social* (Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Aid), Vice-Presidency of the Republic

Tomás Concha, Vice-Director, Human Rights Programme, Vice-Presidency of the Republic

Donors (G24)

Luz Angela Bernal, Programme Officer, Swiss Development Cooperation

Torgny Svenungsson, Aid Advisor, Swedish International Development Agency, Embassy of Sweden

Rodrigo Parot, Colombia Country Representative, Inter-American Development Bank

Manuel Rivera, European Commission Delegation – Bogotá, European Union

Nancy Hardy, First Secretary, Supervisory Program Officer, USAID; and Luis Roa, USAID

Diana Muñoz, Development Officer, Embassy of Canada

Oriol Willock, Human Rights/Technical Cooperation, British Embassy

Juan Ignacio Arango, Coordination Analyst, United Nations

Marcela Salazar, Local Aid Official, European Commission Delegation – Bogotá, European Union

Fernando Rey Yébenes, General Deputy General Coordinator of Spanish Aid in Colombia, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo AECID

Colombian social actors

Antonio Madariaga, Executive Director, Viva la Ciudadanía, representative of civil society organisations in the Alliance

Ana Cristina Portilla, representative of Colombian Jurors' Commission (Comisión Colombiana de Juristas) in the Alliance

Rubén Fernández, Corporación Región, representative of civil society organisations in ALOP (Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción al Desarrollo)

Gloria Flórez, Executive Director, Asociación para la Promoción Social Alternativa MINGA, representative of civil society organisations in the Alliance

Mario Gómez, Director, Fundación Restrepo Barco

Alejandro Matos, Country Representative, Oxfam Intermón

Gary Burniske, Country Director, Mercy Corps (USA/UK)

Kristina Jannerbo, Country Representative, Diakonía (Sweden)

Johnny Glennie, Representative, Christian Aid (United Kingdom and Ireland)

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